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FM AMEMBASSY ZAGREB  
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RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 0031

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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR EUR/SCE - PFEUFFER

E.O. 12356: DECL: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [AF](#) [HR](#)

SUBJECT: DEFENSE MINISTER RENEWS ISAF COMMITMENT

REF: Zagreb 813

11. (SBU) SUMMARY AND COMMENT: In a July 14 introductory meeting with Ambassador Bradtke, Minister of Defense Berislav Roncevic reiterated the GoC's long-term commitment to keep troops in Afghanistan. He said he will ask Parliament this fall for authorization to increase Croatia's force contribution to ISAF. We expect Parliament to approve raising the number of troops from approximately 150 (reftel) to 300. END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

RONCEVIC: WE UNDERSTAND THE NEED FOR EXTENDED ISAF PRESENCE  
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12. (SBU) Minister Roncevic assured the Ambassador that the US was Croatia's number one partner in defense and military cooperation and that the GoC will remain a reliable partner in ISAF and other international missions. After visiting troops in Afghanistan, Roncevic said he is well aware of the reasons why foreign troops will be needed for a long time.

13. (SBU) Roncevic highlighted the GoC's continued engagement with its Adriatic-Three partners. He underlined the importance of this cooperation on the path to NATO membership. Noting SecDef Rumsfeld's upcoming visit to Albania, Roncevic said the GoC intends to invite the SecDef to Dubrovnik.

BRADTKE